



ABA BUSINESS LAW SECTION

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Nonprofit Organizations Committee

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2017 OUTSTANDING NONPROFIT LAWYER AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The ABA Celebrates Outstanding Nonprofit Lawyers

Washington, D.C. – June 14, 2017: The legal nonprofit community today named the 2017 recipients of the annual “**Outstanding Nonprofit Lawyer Awards.**” The Nonprofit Organizations Committee of the American Bar Association, Business Law Section, recognizes accomplished and civic-minded nonprofit lawyers in the categories of Academic, Attorney, In-House Counsel, and Young Attorney. Additionally, the Committee bestows the Vanguard Award on a leading legal practitioner for his or her lifetime commitment to the nonprofit field. The 2017 recipients are:



Vanguard Award – for distinguished lifetime achievement in the nonprofit sector:

Jeffery L. Yablon, Partner, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP



Outstanding Academic Award – for distinguished academic achievement in the nonprofit sector:

Alicia Plerhoples, Associate Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center



Outstanding Lawyer Award – for distinguished service as outside counsel to nonprofit organizations:

Thomas K. Hyatt, Partner, Dentons



Outstanding In-House Counsel Award – for distinguished service by a nonprofit in-house counsel:

Faith Thomas, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.



Outstanding Young Lawyer Award – for distinguished service by an attorney in the nonprofit sector who is under the age of 35 or has been in practice less than 10 years:

Celeste E. Arduino, Member, Bodman

VANGUARD AWARD

Pillsbury partner Jeffery Yablon has for more than 40 years successfully represented and advised tax exempt organizations of all political and cultural views, from the most liberal to the most conservative. His most notable matters include litigating the landmark “Big Mama Rag” case, which held unconstitutional a Treasury regulation used by IRS agents to deny charitable status to an organization because it was founded by and operated for gay women. Jeff also led a team of lawyers in a three-year battle to obtain formal IRS recognition of tax-exempt status of Crossroads GPS, a high-profile conservative organization at the center of the “IRS Targeting Scandal.”

A member of the board of advisers of *Taxation of Exempts* magazine and a former member of the board of advisers of *Corporate Taxation* magazine, Jeff is also the author of *As Certain as Death: Quotations About Taxes*, a collection of tax quotes now in its 10th edition. One of his more popular quotes is “America’s tax laws are similar to the writings of Karl Marx and the writings of Sigmund Freud in that many of the people who loudly proclaim opinions about these documents have never read a word of them.”

Jeff earned his law degree from Stanford Law School, where he was Developments Editor for the Stanford Law Review. He obtained his bachelor’s degree, with honors, from the University of Wisconsin.

OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC AWARD RECIPIENT

Alicia Plerhoples has contributed greatly to the development of teaching law and social entrepreneurship, which is transforming the way attorneys advise nonprofits on traditional legal issues. By creating the first-ever Social Enterprise and Nonprofit Clinic at Georgetown Law, she helps train the next generation of lawyers to think differently about how to apply existing areas of law and to guide social entrepreneurs and social enterprises who are developing new approaches to address intractable social problems.

From 2013 to 2015 alone, Professor Plerhoples made significant contributions to 30 nonprofit and social enterprise organizations through her supervision of 36 clinic student attorneys who provided more than 10,700 hours of pro bono legal services. Her student attorneys helped to form Aloetree, the first benefit corporation in the District of Columbia, which produces ecofriendly children's clothing and other products that promote kid-friendly service projects and fundraisers, and also contributes a portion of its profits to combat child trafficking. The clinic students also provided legal advice on issues such as consumer privacy, trademark and brand management, and anti-terrorism financing policies, among other important transactional issues.

Her published academic work focuses on clinical legal education, social enterprise, nonprofit law, and the interaction of those topics.

OUTSTANDING LAWYER AWARD RECIPIENT

A partner in the Washington office of Dentons US LLP, Tom Hyatt is a nationally recognized practitioner and thought leader at the intersection of nonprofit law, governance, and policy. He has practiced nonprofit law for nearly 35 years and co-chairs Denton's US Nonprofit Entities Practice. Tom currently serves as Board Chair of Appalachian Regional Healthcare, a rural nonprofit health system that serves communities in eastern Kentucky and southern West Virginia in the most indigent region in America. Prior to that, Tom served as Board Chair of Maryland Nonprofits, which provides support services and educational opportunities for nonprofits across the state and throughout the country.

In 2016, Tom led the US legal team that worked to establish the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, including the creation of a new US charity, the 100 Lives Foundation. The 100 Lives Foundation was created to preserve and tell the stories of the survivors and saviors of the Armenian genocide in 1915. Inspired by these heroic histories, 100 Lives Foundation and related charities established the Aurora Prize. Recipients will be recognized for the exceptional impact of their actions on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes.

Another important recent project was Tom's work on behalf of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). Tom coordinated a blue ribbon task force, comprising college and university presidents, trustees, and thought leaders, in developing the AGB Board of Directors' Statement on Campus Climate, Inclusion, and Civility, and was the Statement's principal author. This Statement addresses some of the most challenging social and political issues on college campuses today and has been hailed as the best work to date for governing boards on this subject.

Tom is the co-author of *The Law of Tax Exempt Healthcare Organizations*, Fourth Edition (2013, Cum. Supp. 2017) published by Wiley, and the author of the AGB Effective Committee Series Guidebook, *The Compensation Committee* (2013). He is a regular contributor to *Trusteeship* magazine. Tom also serves as a Senior Fellow for Public Policy at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

OUTSTANDING IN-HOUSE COUNSEL AWARD RECIPIENT

Faith Thomas oversees the complex functions of the legal department of Enterprise Community Partners, the nationally active, affordable-housing charity. Faith's legal responsibilities include managing corporate governance, labor and employment, litigation, contracts, intellectual property and general administrative matters, as well as the negotiation, documentation and closing and servicing of all loans and grants.

In addition to Faith's work at Enterprise, she has served on the board of directors of the Junior League of Baltimore and The Bryn Mawr School and the legal editorial advisory board of The Daily Record. She is a member of the board of directors of GBMC Healthcare, Inc. (the parent corporation of the Greater Baltimore Medical Center and its affiliated organizations) and is actively involved in leadership roles in many Baltimore-area civic organizations.

Faith joined Enterprise in 1991, moving up rapidly through the ranks, becoming assistant general counsel and subsequently general counsel in 1995 and vice president in 1997. Before Faith joined Enterprise, she worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the Office of the General Counsel; for Gordon Feinblatt LLC in the commercial real estate department; and for Bancroft Homes as assistant general counsel.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG LAWYER AWARD RECIPIENT

Celeste Arduino's commitment to the nonprofit sector began at the start of her career, just before the Great Recession when transactional and litigation departments were attractive options to many young attorneys. Along with her placement in the firm's Tax/Nonprofit Organizations Group, Celeste became a member of Bodman's Pro Bono Committee as a first-year associate. Thus, even as she began to develop expertise in nonprofit law as part of her formal assignment (quickly becoming a valuable resource for the firm's foundation clients), she began actually working in the sector through her pro bono activities.

In the nine years since becoming an attorney, Celeste's commitment to the nonprofit sector has led her to work with an amazing variety of clients on projects vital to southeast Michigan. Her clients range from multi-billion dollar global foundations to startups that provide basic quality of life improvements for low-income residents. She has used her legal skills to help clients form public/philanthropic partnerships that have brought ambitious projects to reality. For example, Celeste advised a private foundation client that participated in the complex funding arrangements for Detroit's light rail system, which began operations this year.

Celeste describes her work with the C.S. Mott Foundation's programs to address the Flint Water Crisis as her most satisfying project to date. The crisis is unique in terms of its breadth and the potential long-term effects, as well as the complexity and cost of the solution. Legally, the effort is unusually complicated because it involves local, state, and federal legal issues and resources. Celeste has played a key role in her firm's efforts to advise the Foundation on its response to the Flint Water Crisis.

Celeste is an emerging leader in Michigan's nonprofits bar, becoming co-chair of the State Bar of Michigan Business Law Section's Nonprofit Corporations Committee in 2016.

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